

PLAY URGED AS A CURE

In a recent interview Francis Neilson, M. P., said that Americans had lost the art of living, that they had no such thing as leisure and that their daily programme was an unmitigated grind. The most recent distinguished visitor from abroad, Pierre Loti, the French author, is saying much the same thing. It is the first American characteristic a foreigner notices and the last he gets accustomed to. The incessant hurry and bustle of Americans is the marvel and the despair of foreign visitors and it has been said that the chief occupation here is biting seconds in two.

Criticism of this sort has never been taken in bad part. Indeed, it was regarded as flattering testimony of American industry and enterprise. But recently the situation has assumed a graver character. Physicians and nerve specialists have warned the country that it was on the verge of a nervous breakdown, that the strain of incessant toil without recreation was proving too much. They urged that recreation, greater in quantity and better in quality, was necessary, that the nation must learn to play and that wholesome, recreative sport was essential to the well being of the country.

In addition students of social and industrial questions have declared that the situation contains a serious social and moral menace. All work and no play is as bad for an entire people as it is for the proverbial Jack. In their opinion it is the duty of the Government not only to provide leisure for the people but also to offer means of wholesome recreation sufficiently attractive to draw men and women and boys and girls away from the commercialized substitutes for play-centres: the saloons, dance halls, pool rooms and other similar resorts.

Such criticism applies, of course, particularly to the larger cities of the country and especially to the greatest city of all, New York. In support of it an impressive argument is supplied by the changes that have come about in Chicago and Cleveland since these municipalities have taken the problem of the citizen's recreation in hand. Frederic C. Howe, director of the People's Institute of this city, said in speaking on this subject:

"What is the great need of New York? It is not clean streets. It is not even economy of political reform. It is the great need of life in all its significance. Two things comprise life, work and leisure, and leisure means play.

"There is one thing we Americans entirely overlook, one vital fact that we fail to appreciate, and that is that civilization depends upon how leisure is employed. It is during leisure time that the character, mind, body and culture of a people are created.

"As life is at present organized in this country it consists of eight or ten hours of work and as many hours of sleep. We alone of all the nations of the earth make no public provision for leisure. No country in the world offers so many opportunities for play to the rich, and no country in the world offers so little to the poor.

"It is otherwise abroad, in Germany, Italy, France and Continental countries. They look upon the hours of leisure as a time for bringing happiness and culture into the lives of the people. Music is provided. Art is provided. The opera, the theatre and opportunities for wholesome, clean, cultural play have a place in the city budget along with provisions for sanitation, health and education. In consequence of this public provision for play the commercialized amusement agencies are compelled to compete on the high standards established by the community.

"Jane Addams in a recent utterance, gave an excellent picture of the condition existing in the modern city.

"Since the soldiers of Cromwell," she said, "shut up the people's playgrounds and destroyed their pleasure fields the Anglo-Saxon city has turned over the provision for public recreation to the most evil minded and most unscrupulous members of the community. We see thousands of girls walking up and down the streets on a pleasant evening, with no chance to catch a sight of pleasure even through a lighted window save as these lurid places provide it. Apparently the modern city sees in these girls only two possibilities, both of them commercial: first a chance to utilize by day their new and tender labor power in its factories and shops, and then another chance in the evening to extract from them their petty wages by pandering to their love of pleasure.

"Perhaps never before have the pleasures of the young and mature become so definitely separated as in the modern city. The public dance halls, filled with frivolous and irresponsible young people in a feverish search for pleasure, are but a sorry substitute for the old dances on the village green, in which all of the older people of the village participated."

"Here you have the picture and the problem. We cannot expect commercialized agencies to be moved by other than commercial motives. Only the community itself can grapple with this problem of leisure time, yet we in this country have allowed the individual to shift for himself. We have, in our characteristic way, individualized recreation. We have made it a part of our individual philosophy.

"The poverty of the poor makes commercialized recreation prohibitive. Access even to the parks and suburbs is difficult on account of the carfare. In the winter months the city is barren of opportunity. Most of the places are closed down or are not suitable for winter use.

"The demand for recreation is as keen in the winter as it is in the summer, however. This demand is met by saloons, dance halls, theatres and other mediums of commercialized amusement. The 800 dance halls, the 600 moving picture shows and the 11,350 saloons in Greater New York are an eloquent proof in themselves of the universality of this hunger and of the sort of supply which commerce offers to meet this need.

"These agencies are the response to the city's neglect. They thrive on the hunger for companionship and play. Vice, crime, drunkenness and disorder are the bitter fruits of our policy. They are by-products of the street, the saloon and the dance hall. Crime is mostly committed during leisure hours. Our indifference to this elemental necessity has brought a fine revenge.

"The waste involved in such a policy

is colossal. Even the money waste is beyond calculation. The moral waste is incalculable too. We could probably cut the vice and crime of this city in half by proper expenditure for public amusement. We would relieve the penal and correctional institutions of much of their onerous efforts to control the underworld if we gave the millions of children and grownups a wholesome outlet for their craving for play. New York spends annually \$16,000,000 on its police Department, \$3,800,000 on courts and criminal administration and \$1,600,000 on institutions for the detention of boys and girls alone. What an enormous opportunity for saving is here offered!

"We know from experience that the opening of a playground immediately reduces juvenile delinquency in the neighborhood in which it is located. Some of the schoolhouse dances have put the dangerous commercial dance halls out of business.

"In Chicago, which has gone in for such reform on a much larger scale than has ever been attempted here, it has been shown that such a policy effects a most gratifying moral and economical result. In the stock yards districts of that city juvenile lawbreaking increased 44 per cent. in a short time. For the entire city the increase in such delinquency showed an increase of 14 per cent. for two years. Round about the recreation centres there was a decrease of 17 per cent. These figures speak for themselves.

"Chicago is less than half the size of this city and does not compare with it in wealth. Some years ago that city appropriated \$11,000,000 for building people's clubs or recreation centres. At these centres every possible provision was made for community life. There were extensive playgrounds, sufficiently attractive to invite the laboring classes after their hard day's work. Around these playgrounds were benches and seats for the mothers of the community. Here they might sit while their children played. Fathers, mothers and children could all find amusement at these centres, and the influences that make for the disintegration of the family in large cities were thus greatly reduced.

"These clubhouses were organized on an elaborate basis. There was a trained director to look after the work of the various departments. There was a large and well equipped gymnasium, baths, a library and a hall for meetings and concerts. In some there were restaurants operated at cost, and a few even went so far as to publish their own newspapers.

"Twelve such clubhouses have been built in recent years. The results have been so gratifying that at the Town Plan Exhibit held in Berlin in 1909 it was voted that of all the cities in the world Chicago had done most and had been most successful in this direction.

"A new community feeling arose in those neighborhoods in which the clubs were located. People met more frequently and came in closer touch with each other. In fact these recreation centres give a new meaning to democracy; they encourage thoughtfulness, generosity, equality and inspire people with a new vision.

"In Cleveland, a city of 500,000 souls and without the resources of New York, a similar condition of things exists. One of the things that endeared Tom L. Johnson to the people of that city was the vision he had of the necessity of public provision for play. He removed the 'keep off the grass' signs from the parks. Forty baseball diamonds were opened, both in the parks and on private land. Baseball leagues were organized by the city in the various factory districts. The park department issued permits for games on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays and encouraged the leagues in every way possible. Thousands of people came to these amateur games, and it was observed in a short time that saloon evils were greatly reduced.

"Bath houses and gymnasiums were built. Instructors were put in charge. These places were daily packed by throngs of men, women and children.

"These offerings proved so popular that the original plans were extended. More than a score of playgrounds were opened and a hundred odd tennis courts were laid out. The industrial neighborhoods of the city spontaneously organized into great groups and arranged for periodical romping days, fetes and festivities.

"Recently Cleveland made the experiment of adding municipal dance halls to the already long list of municipal amusement places. Two such halls were established, dances were given every afternoon and evening, good orchestras were engaged and three cents was charged for admission. They proved an unqualified success. In two months thousands of young men and women attended these dances and there was not a single arrest for misconduct.

"Now Cleveland is planning to build a great dance hall to be operated throughout the year and equipped with a bathhouse and a restaurant. In the summer dancing will take place on the roof.

"The results of these generous public activities are making Cleveland one of the most orderly and most moral cities in the country. It is singularly free from vice and crime. More than this, it has created in the residents a love for their city such as I have not found anywhere else in the country.

"Many things have of course been done in this city, but much more is still to be done. The recreation pier has proved a great success. The schools that have been made available to the people for educational and recreational purposes are numerous, but New York is more than a mere city. It is an empire. In no place is congestion so terrible as here. Conditions here call for greater action. We have done much, but we must do more.

"This is an age of preventive medicine. The programme of the People's Institute is to check vice, crime and disorder at its very source. We believe that the city can compete with the saloon, the dance hall and the commercialized amusement place, and at very little cost, by offering an alternative for the boy and girl on the street and the father and mother in the tenement.

"The People's Institute is working on a programme to satisfy the need which the modern city has created.

"The Institute is promoting a programme for the development of music in the schools through orchestras, glee clubs and choral societies, by organizing concerts and contests and by specializing this agency of education."

THE MAN WHO KNEW ★ SANTA CLAUS BEST



Dr. Clement Clarke Moore
Author of "The Night Before Christmas"

VISIT FROM ST. NICHOLAS

'Twas the night before Christmas when all through the house
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,
In hopes that Saint Nicholas soon would be there.
The children were nestled all snug in their beds,
While visions of sugarplums danced through their heads.
And Mama in her kerchief and I in my cap
Had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap:
When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter
I sprang from my bed to see what was the matter.
Away to the window I fled like a flash,
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash,
The moon on the breast of the new fallen snow
Gave the lustre of mid day to objects below,
When what to my wondering eyes should appear
But a miniature sleigh and eight tiny reindeer,
With a little old driver so lively and quick
I knew in a moment it must be Saint Nick.
More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,
And he whistled and shouted and called them by name.
"Now, Dasher! now, Dancer! now, Prancer! and Vixen!
On, Comet! on, Cupid! on, Donner and Blitzen!
To the top of the porch! To the top of the wall!
Now dash away! dash away! dash away all!"
As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly
When they meet with an obstacle mount to the sky,
So up to the housetop the coursers they flew,
With the sleigh full of toys and Saint Nicholas too.
And then in a twinkling I heard on the roof
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof—
As I drew in my head and was turning around,
Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound.
He was dressed all in furs from his head to his foot,
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot.
A bundle of Toys he had flung on his back,
And he looked like a pedler just opening his pack;
His eyes—how they twinkled! His dimples how merry!
His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry!
His droll little mouth was drawn up in a bow,
And the beard on his chin was as white as the snow;
The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,
And the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath;
He had a broad face and a little round belly,
That shook when he laughed like a bowlful of jelly.
He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,
And I laughed when I saw him in spite of myself;
A wink of his eye and a twist of his head
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread;
He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work
And filled all the stockings, then turned with a jerk,
And laying his finger aside of his nose
And giving a nod up the chimney he rose.
He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,
And away they all flew like the down of a thistle;
But I heard him exclaim ere he drove out of sight,
"Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good night."



Decorating Dr. Moore's Grave

BATTLESHIP LAUNCHING

GR EAT is the engineering task involved in the launching of a vessel of the size of the battleship New York, which was recently set afloat at the navy yard in Brooklyn. The spectators in general feel that the real moment of suspense has passed when the sponsor smashes the bottle upon the battle craft's ponderous stern. The mere fact that the vessel sweeps smoothly toward the water conveys to them the idea that is a simple performance that calls for no wonderment, because, after all, isn't she just sliding down hill? But the man in charge of her building and immediately responsible for her safe transfer from the land to the water is conscious of no elation until she rides upon the tide, and then he breathes a heartfelt sigh of relief. When you know something of the work that precedes a launching you will understand the apprehension which the builder feels until his ship is securely afloat.

The battleship New York when completed will have a total displacement of something over 28,000 tons, but at the time of her launching her weight was probably about 10,000 tons. Ten thousand tons of steel is a counterpart in weight of many a skyscraper, but skyscrapers are designed to remain stationary. The problem of the naval constructor is first to fashion his ship upon the land and then to carry her to the water without breaking her back en route. The bigger the vessel the harder this task becomes.

The New York has a total length of 573 feet, like that of her sistership, Texas, launched at the Newport News Shipbuilding Company's yard some months ago. The New York had to be moved something more than a tenth of a mile before her bow reached the river—the vessel being launched stern first. In all this distance everything had to be equal to the stresses placed upon it, if accident or perhaps disaster was to be avoided.

Some years ago faulty calculations came to a fatal climax when one of the cruisers of the British navy was launched. That ship tumbled on her way to the water and turned over and sank, drowning many workmen who were busy at their tasks inside of her and below decks. When the French cruiser Danton should have gone overboard about three years ago she stuck after travelling about forty yards, and it was a matter of several weeks before she was finally put in the water. Perhaps now you can grasp something of the anxiety and the responsibility which Naval Constructor Robert Stocker felt until the New York floated upon the East River.

Broadly speaking, the launching of a large ship begins before even her keel is laid, because everything must be considered contributory to that event. The site where the vessel is to be built must be chosen with the ultimate event of launching uppermost in mind and, as far as possible, taking advantage of natural conditions. It is preferable if the land slopes gently toward the water's edge, but above all things the ground must be solid enough to bear without yielding the growing weight of the craft while under construction.

This must be the case not only under the blocks which bear her body while

building, but likewise under the sliding ways upon which she will finally move into the water. Even though the battleship is a thing of wonderful strength when afloat, still it is sensitive to slight variations from proper conditions during the time it rests upon the land. The sagging of an inch in the supporting ground may mean deformation to the growing structure and consequent weakness, and at the time of launching this yielding of the foundation may lead to delay, disappointment or even actual damage.

In order that the foundation may be rigid enough it is customary to drive into the ground many rows of pilings and so to fasten them together that they shall add materially to the stability of what is usually called the building slip. Sometimes concrete and masonry are employed to insure the desired firmness. There must be ample water at the time of launching to float the vessel and to give latitude enough for her initial plunge. Therefore tidal conditions at the probable season of launching must be considered, and not infrequently an hour chosen which will hamper least the traffic upon a busy waterway.

In the case of the New York, which is a larger and a longer ship than the Florida, which preceded her at the navy yard, it was necessary to move the building slip further to the river side, and this necessitated restrengthening the underlying ground. As the land does not at that point slope helpfully toward the East River the desired incline had to be insured by laying the New York's keel at an angle which brought her bow up above the roofs of some of the neighboring buildings. Now let us follow the further preparations from the ground up.

The keel blocks are next laid. These are heavy pieces of timber, rectangular in section, placed one upon the other and on which the ship is actually built. These blocks or piles of blocks are placed at frequent intervals, say three or four feet apart, and a line along the tops of all of them forms the gradient upon which the keel of the ship is laid. At the lowest point near the river these blocks are high enough to make sure that the bow of the ship will be clear of the ground at the time she dips forward when reaching the water.

When the keel has been laid on the blocks, then from these foundation plates rise the steel frames or ribs, and to these are joined the deck beams and the transverse walls or bulkheads. Finally over this framework or skeleton are fastened the inner and the outside platings which are technically termed skins. First the frames and then their succeeding plating are held in place by shores which to the layman appear to be misused telegraph poles, and for a time these supports actually bear a part of the weight of the ship. To the casual eye they have every appearance of being props needful to keep the vessel from toppling off of the keel blocks.

Without going into further details, the hull and body structure of the battleship should be about 65 per cent. completed when ready for launching. As has been said, in the case of the New York this meant a total weight of about 10,000 tons, in the case of the battleship Texas the weight on the ways at launching was something over 11,000 tons.

HONORING OUR POET

WHILE the children all over the land are occupied with the gifts left them by Santa Claus many New York children will gather to pay a tribute to the memory of the man who knew Santa Claus best. Clement Clarke Moore, who wrote "Twas the night before Christmas," is buried in Trinity Church Cemetery, at Riverside Drive and 14th street, and there the children will go on Christmas morning to lay a wreath upon his grave. The thing was done for the first time last year and so eager was the children's interest that it is likely to become a New York custom.

The children will gather at the Chapel of the Intercession, at Broadway and 15th street, and led by the vested choir march to the foot of 15th street, singing Christmas songs and carols. Hundreds of other children will join the marching column, their hands filled with flowers and holly.

At 15th street the procession will turn into the cemetery and the children will form a circle round the plain granite monument which is just under the wall. Little heads will bow while the rector of the chapel, the Rev. Milo H. Gates, reads an old Christmas prayer. Then the children will sing the "First Noel," and one of them will recite the poem that all children know and love.

The Rev. Mr. Gates is likely to tell the story of the man who wrote the poem and how he lived as a boy in a big house at Ninth avenue and Twenty-second street in the days when Greenwich Village seemed far away from New York. The big square house had been built by his grandfather, an English army officer who came over to help the Colonists in the French and Indian wars and stayed to make his home in the New World.

He named his big white house on top of a hill Chelsea in memory of the big army hospital in London, where he had been more than once. He left it to his daughter, Charity, who married a young minister, afterward Bishop Moore, president of Columbia College, which was called King's College while the Colonies still had a king.

There little Clement Clarke Moore was born on July 15, 1798. All about him as he played along the walks or under the fruit trees in the orchard he saw the farms which the Dutch neighbors had inherited from their fathers and grandfathers. It was one of these neighbors, a red cheeked Dutch farmer's son, working in the garden, who first told the little boy the story of Saint Nicholas, whose name the Dutch children had shortened to Santa Claus. At Christmas Santa Claus always filled the wooden shoes of the children back in Holland, but he had not come over to the New World. But the neighbor thought that if Clement watched for placed. Neither forgets to mention that he was the author of the poem which will be remembered long after they have crumbled to dust.

So the little boy, who had no brothers and sisters to play with, watched for